I. Southeast Asia Union Pathfinder Camporee  
   *Gratian Perera* <grationperera@gmail.com> December 25:  
   The 9th Southeast Asia Union (International) Pathfinder Camporee. On behalf of the Youth Department of Southeast Asia Union Mission with its headquarters in Singapore, I wish to extend our sincere thanks to the readers of this e-Newsletter for your support to the success of our camporee. The camporee was brought to a great success with God’s providential hands which took control of bad weather and making things right in places where we humanly speaking had no control over. This was direct manifestation of God answering each of your prayers on our behalf! We praise God for His blessings and thank you immensely for your prayers!  
   Though our preparation was made only for 1300 pathfinders to be accommodated, the camporee drew 1450 pathfinders from 27 different countries from around the globe. Pastor Jonathan Tejel, world Pathfinder Director, and Pastor Jobbie Yabbut, SSD Youth director commented that this was one of the best camporees they have attended and surely both of them have contributed to the camporee success! Pastor Kevin Costello, Camp Pastor (SSD Associate secretary/treasurer) kept the spiritual tone a high priority of the camporee unifying pathfinders in 777 prayer initiative through the ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication) model of prayer. With the able leadership of Sabah Seventh-day Adventist Mission, the camporee organizing committee and sub committees members, numbering over 150 people under the leadership of 44 different committees worked round the clock, tirelessly and sacrificially, sleeping only few hours each night in open air gazing starry night, to make sure to offer only the best to the Pathfinders. Many Pathfinders have commented personally and in the facebook showing their appreciation for planning the camporee and providing spiritual blessings to help them “Walk by Faith” in their daily living. Countless pictures of the camporee events can be viewed in “9th SAUM Pathfinder Camporee” facebook page and also logging into the facebook page of Gratian Perera.  
   During the five-day event pathfinders were kept busy with 23 different honor/skill classes, several fun activities including kayaking, flying fox, commando obstacle course, rich and diverse cultural presentations, excellent array of cultural village and market day activity, skill demonstrations, daily morning exercise, and spirit-filled devotional presentations. During the camporee 27 Master Guides in training were invested as Master Guides and 15 new souls were added to to the church fellowship through the baptism.  
   Minister of Youth and sports of the state of Sabah and the Deputy Minister of Tourism, culture, and environment of the state of Sabah graced the opening and closing ceremonies respectively. Both ministries contributed in kind and financially to welcome the Pathfinders to Sabah. While the camporee souvenir T-shirts were donated by the Ministry of Sports and Youth, an evening of cultural presentation was staged by the generosity of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Environment. Local Chinese and English newspapers gave a wide news coverage of the camporee. As a good-will gesture, the participants of the 9th SAUM PF Camporee raised funds to donated a bus stop shelter for the local school children in the village where the camporee was held. Mr. & Mrs. Gunawan Sulaiman, the proprietors of the NewStart Food Pt. Ltd. in Singapore and Mr. & Mrs. Pirom Priyawat, a friendly couple of the SDA Church in Thailand made substantial financial contribution to make camporee registration fee affordable to those who otherwise may not have been able to attend.
After a discussion with the Mission Youth Directors of SAUM, the leaders unanimously voted to hold the 10th SAUM Pathfinder Camporee in Vietnam from March 18 - 21, 2015. We aim to have a wider participation and to draw 2015 pathfinders from around the globe!

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II. Report of the Storm in the Philippines

Jay'len Roa <nelliejoy@gmail.com> December 24:
Nellie Joy <7thdayadventistguamfamily@gmail.com>

"I was asked to forward this is an update on the ongoing crisis situation occurring in the Philippines as related to us for desperate help through our dear sister Jay'len Roa currently a student in the area tragically hit with this natural disaster."

On December 16, 2011 at 12 midnight while many were already tucked into their beds sleeping, Typhoon Sendong had hit two major cities of Mindanao: Iligan City and Cagayan de Oro, including the towns in between the two.

Water rose higher at 2 a.m. Up to the point where some people had to climb up to their roofs of the the homes. Cars floated over their house gate, a bridge destroyed, homes destroyed as well as villages completely wiped away. It had flooded homes, churches, hospitals, stores.

Many were swept away in their sleep and drowned. 1000 plus have been reported dead, 800 plus still missing. The death/missing tolls are still rising up till this day as bodies are being discovered.

As of today, by standers and other have spotted many floating out in the middle of the ocean holding onto wood. Some are survivors. Even children from ages 2 - 12 were one of those who survived out in the middle of the ocean. There are no longer any space left to put the dead bodies. Some are being thrown out in the land fill because there's nowhere left to put them.

Coffins for children are very little.

Some people are still at their homes despite the damages. A family wrote on their dusty window of their destroyed home "Bloody christmas year".

Donations have been provided all over the world. The news about the calamity that had happened here only appeared once in America and other countries on CNN. When it comes to Provinces, a few people care less.

Even the President didn’t appear or help after the typhoon the next day.

He had attended a christmas party. Many of the Stars including the President's sister had no heart felt for what had happened, they did not apologize at all either, she defended him instead of giving pity.

She said in her show "life must go on", yes that's true, but not at that very moment on the next day. She also said "It is that the President is not like you and me that we can just hop on the plane and go."

Her understanding that not even the leader of this country can even give up a single party to come and attend the national calamity.

On another part she said "This party was planned for a long time."

TV shows (that are live) continued on as the cities were in need of help. . .

I am just a student. And I have used all the money that I have to help with the victims from morning to night visiting and donating the victims at their homes and villages that have no power, water supply, homes destroyed, we do all that we can and it's still not enough.

My friends and I have also attempted to visit a certain village that was very much affected here in Iligan City, we delivered in the evening and not a single person was there. Only the stench of dead.

Those that have been evacuated, are moving around relocating every other day or so because because people need that location.

It’s heart breaking every time that we are out delivering and it's not enough to give to everyone. It's heart breaking because I have lost a friend from the typhoon as well as relatives. Many of the students of the SDA college hospital have been reported missing/dead. . .

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III. Thailand Mission Renovates Bangkok Office

"Thailand Adventist Mission Office was built many years ago. From time to time we try to renovate here and there in the most needed areas. But this year, the ceiling was falling down in almost every office, so we decided to replace the ceiling for the whole upstairs area. Four or five bids were sought and finally we chose a quote from the most qualified builder with a reasonable price. Now the renovation has started and is about 60% complete. 
One challenge has been that the floods have affected the home of our contractor, so the work has now slowed down. We will spend Bht 80,000 or US$32,361 for labor and Bht 50,000 or US$1,476 for the materials. Once the innovations had started, we discovered that the roof had been leaking in parts and so this also will have to be fixed. At least, though, we found out that the framework and general structure of our building is very strong, and we still can use it for many years in the future.

"The second floor where the ABC is located is also being renovated. The Southeast Asia Union Mission transferred the management of the ABC Book Center to Thailand Adventist Mission. Thailand Mission has a translation committee to translate as many of Mrs. White's books as possible into the Thai language. The books that have already been translated into Thai will be revised and reprinted and these will be available in the ABC bookstore. Thailand Mission has also coordinated with the Bible Society to stock the relevant translations of the Bible in our bookstore.

"A long held dream of a library for the staff and pastors for research purposes is also planned for one section of this floor. Another section will be for the display and sale of Handicraft Center products from Chiangmai. And yet another section will be for the products of Mission Health Food Company with a section also serving as a bookstore for the Home Health Education Service (HHES). And finally the office of the SDA English Language School will be housed in another section." -- from the current SHINING LIGHT IN THAILAND

The approximate cost will be Bht 600,000 of US$ 17,710 for the renovation of the whole ground floor to make the best use of the facility for the benefit of God in Thailand Adventist Mission.

IV. Season's Greetings

1. Robert & Treva Burgess <bobtrea48@yahoo.com> December 23:

   We are indebted to a number of earlybird friends for keeping us from being late in getting all our exciting news off to family and friends. To make it easy and simple, Bob is going to share the highlights and Treva will add other things.

   Starting with the most recent: We just returned from China a few weeks ago, making 19 the number of times we have crossed the Pacific. We were part of the China Union Mission's Biennial Planning Session.

   Some of you know we lived in China for two years teaching in a university while supervising the Adventist Development and Relief program.

   One of the exciting parts of this year's Session was for the first time having 10 Mainland pastors participate with us. We want to commend the China Christian Council for assisting in getting visas for these pastors. You see, even though Hong Kong is an important part of China, it is necessary for Mainland citizens to get a visa to visit Hong Kong. They brought us many exciting reports regarding healings and church growth. (If you invite us to your church, we will share more with you.)

   When the "Old China Hands" returned from China in 1949 they brought you greetings from 22,000 members. Today we are delighted to bring you greetings from 400,000, scattered across China in 1000 registered churches and 3,000 legal house churches.

   Many large cities in China number their cities in the tens of millions with more English speaking people than in the United States and soon to be more than all the world combined. Perhaps you have never heard of China's largest city, Chungking, whose population is 38 million—which is more than the population of Canada, and is as large as the State of Maine, with 800 babies born and 500 deaths each day.

   Now for Treva's part: Aside from my battle with Macular Degeneration, we are awakened each morning without an ache or pain. On our way to China we spent a week in Korea (partly as guests of my former student, Jim Yoon) where we lived and taught at Sahmyook University for five years. The student body has now increased to 5,500. Bob was the guest speaker at the Sahmyook International Church on the University campus, where we met some of our former students who are now on the faculty or pastoring in one of the 700 churches with 200,000 members. And we got to visit with our dear friends, Pastor and Mrs. Kim and family.

   We are looking forward to spending Christmas with Beth, Mike, Michelle and Mark. Marlowe and family might be well enough to join us on Sabbath.

   In spite of the moral decline and economic mess we have in our nation, God is still willing to supply all your needs (Phil. 4:19).

   With love and best wishes,

   Bob and Treva * 760-861-1022

   PS: Our "China Story" is moving forward for publication. Keep watching!
2. Gration Perera <grationperera@gmail.com> December 25:

Please be kind enough to include this short note in both of your SUD & FED e-News letters. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

I take this opportunity to thanks Dr. Charles Tidwell, an outstanding Administrator (who taught me the ABC of Adventist Church administration during his leadership in Sri Lanka) and an excellent mentor (took me through times of rough going in local church leadership) for his untiring effort to keep the SUDs and FEDs up-to-date and united through his newsletters!

Behind him is his dear wife, equally supportive of his ministry. Further, before the season is over (together with my wife Sherine, children; Dinu, Rochael, and Lakshi) we want to send Season’s Greetings and wish God’s rich blessings that you both will enter into a brand new year and it will usher you through with excellent health, Christian happiness, and pathway leading to holiness!

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Gration Perera, Director
Youth Ministries Department
Southeast Asia Union Mission
SINGAPORE 298186

3. Len Tolhurst <lpthrst@bigpond.net.au>

Since I sent out our last Christmas letter I did get to go to Tonga and New Zealand. The Tongans conducted a Youth Congress in Hapa’ai in the village of Faleloa where Len’s father buried his first wife in 1919. She died as a result of the Spanish flu epidemic which swept the world after the First World War ended. The island is only about three kilometers long by half to one kilometer wide. At that time they were the only Europeans on the island, and there was no hospital nor clinic there. They both came down with the flu, and he recovered but she did not. Though weak he had to conduct her funeral himself as there was no one else there to do it.

The Tongans in New Zealand that were planning to attend the congress decided that they would like to place a new plaque on her grave, as the one previously there had cracked down the middle. They contacted me asking for a photograph of her, and wanting to know what wording to put on the plaque. I sent both to them by e-mail, and they took the black and white photo and using a computer placed a lagoon scene behind her with a coconut palm reaching up over her head, and then turned it all into natural colours, and baked it onto a ceramic tile, and glued it onto the new plaque.

I felt that someone ought to represent the family so arranged with our son Ewan to travel with me. When we arrived there I discovered that they had purchased some 20 or so large floral tributes made of artificial flowers so that they would last for months or more, and brought all of these items up from New Zealand. They also kindly paid for everything, an example of true Polynesian hospitality. When the floral tributes were placed on the grave, one could hardly see it, for the grave was virtually buried with them.

My role was to unveil the new plaque and of course make the expected speech.

I told in some detail the story of how they cared for each other, and also shared with them a couple of my father’s poems that he had written about her death.

During the year I have been conducted a number of seminars on Bible subjects, including a Daniel Seminar type program for non-SDAs in San Remo.

I gave 14 presentations from July 17 to August 28. That is two presentations each Sunday for seven weeks. However I have not been as busy as I was before my heart attacks, which are now over four years ago. My cardiologist is very please with my progress. Several weeks ago I did a seven kilometre walk.

Val is also keeping well physically and shows no signs of heart problems such as I have had. We get home help now for house cleaning and for Val’s showers. We also get a young man to come and do our lawns for us. . . .

On Thursday, December 15 I plan to fly to Melbourne and in the week that follows I have been invited to present 8 topics to the Polish churches there. There are three of them, and some of them will combine for some of the meetings.

Val joins me is wishing you all God’s rich blessing during the Christmas period, and for the new year that will soon begin. We are reminded that each year, in fact each day brings us closer to the return of Jesus. May we all be awaiting His coming and share eternity with Him.

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